

Habits

What is the point of school? – this may be a question you are asking today. And it is a good question to ask at the start of year.

One way of giving an answer to this is to look at how plants are grown.

At home, we have a raised bed in which we plant various seeds. In March and April we prepare the soil and plant the seeds of various plants and vegetables. As the seeds begin to grow, other things start to appear. So in midst of carrots and strawberries, weeds and wild flowers start to appear. After a period of time when the weeds have grown an inch to two, we ruthlessly uproot the weeds so that the proper growth of the plants and vegetables is possible. When the plants grow to a fair height, the weeds do not matter as they die by themselves. The real plants draw all the nourishment, because they are strong and their roots are deep.

So the role of the school and teachers is help you develop your naturally good traits which you all have, and encourage you to let go of negative traits which are not helpful for learning.

The assumption behind this is that we all have a true essence of perfection or greatness, which in the story is the plant. Our true nature may be called different names such as intelligence, joy, limitless, consciousness or truth to name a few. And when we connect with that true nature, our self-awareness, self-belief, self-esteem and self-confidence deepens.

However over time it gets covered over by an artificial layer of bad habits, which may not be so useful. So the question arises how do we connect with our true essence?

I believe three things are needed: faith or belief, discipline and continuous effort. For example to do well in exams, you need to have faith in yourself and believe that you can do well. You also need to have the discipline to put in place a system of study so that you know what to study, how to study and when to study. And of course continuous effort and study is required.

In the growing of plants, there also pests which eat and destroy the plants. Likewise there are three things to watch out for when trying to develop good habits. The first is selfish desire. We learn best by listening and working with others. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by bad company who do not support you in your endeavour to work hard or take you away from your studies. And finally, be aware of how thinking can take away from action. Thinking about study is no substitute for doing study.

To help bring out your inner greatness, what habits are you going to develop in school?

So the challenge for this week is to look and see:

How can we develop good habits?